

TELEGRAM

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INDICATE
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File

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E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: SHUM, AR
SUBJECT: CAREFUL HANDLING OF THE IAHRIC INVITATION

ACTION: SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE

INFO: USCINCSO QUARRY HTS CZ
DIA WASHDC
[REDACTED] BUENOS AIRES 8358

AMB
DCM
POLR
ECOM
ICA
DAO
RF
CHRON

REF: A) BUENOS AIRES 8224; B) BUENOS AIRES 8248

SUMMARY. The October 17 Foreign Ministry announcement confirming that the GOA has favorably responded to the Inter-American Human Rights Commission (IAHRC) request to visit Argentina was the culmination of a quiet GOA campaign to influence public and military opinion to accept the visit as an important and necessary step for Argentina.

END SUMMARY.

1. The Argentine press dropped numerous hints over the last weeks that the US approval of EXIM financing for the Yacyreta Dam was linked to an IAHRIC visit. CLARIN's political reporter Oscar Cardozo was so direct in suggesting these linkages at the time of the EXIM Bank's positive decision that his paper, ^{he} ~~she~~ said, received a call from

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U.S. DEPT. OF STATE, A/RPS/IPS

Margaret P. Grafeld, Director

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the Presidency requesting that no stories appear on the possibility of an IAHC visit until a government announcement was made. According to Cardozo (protect), the explanation privately given was that the Presidency's effort to build support for the visit within the Armed Services was being made more difficult by CLARIN's reporting.

2. On October 15, CLARIN was given the green light and ran a pre-written half-page Cardozo feature the next day leaking the fact that the IAHC was coming to Argentina. The article, however, was reversed headlined--"Agenda Problems: IAHC not coming to Argentina this year". Amid a recap of the visit's on and off history, the story made three points: that a basic decision had been made to invite the Commission; that there was increased flexibility on both sides regarding the conditions; and that time would be needed to work out the details. The only negative note in the article was a reference in passing to the counter-productive results ^{for} the government of Chile to the 1974 IAHC report on that country.

3. On October 16, the Foreign Ministry formally announced the acceptance of the Commission's visit. As reported, the careful statement appeared to be a rewrite of a diplomatic note which recalled the Argentine invitation to the Commission to verify judicial conditions in the

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country, pointed out the GOA's interest in maintaining a substantive dialogue with the Commission, expressed confidence that the visit would be of mutual benefit, and took into account the wide representation on the Commission and the personal qualifications of the Commission's members. The Ministry's announcement stated that the visit would be held at a time convenient to both parties.

4. Though we cannot account why this should be, there was a noticeable difference in the press treatment of the IAHRC story between the Army and Navy influenced papers. Many of the arguments in support of the visit appeared in the ~~front~~ front-page story on October 17 CONVICCION which has ~~strong~~ strong Navy and Massera ties (See reftel A). The brother of the author of the feature article is the Naval officer responsible for "human rights" and image-policy questions in the Navy Secretary-Generalate--and a Massera political staffer. In contrast, the Army controlled daily, LA OPINION ran a small front-page story relating only the substance of the FonMin's announcement.

5. EMBASSY COMMENT: The Casa Rosada's careful massaging of the press treatment of the IAHRC visit as well as the Officer Corps appears to have worked. Interestingly, the early and steady hints of a Rome Mondale-Videla deal linking the EXIM financing turn around and the IAHRC

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visit have produced a reciprocal dampening of what could have been strong negative reactions from both the human rights groups and the numerous hard core nationalists within the military. Although both groups are uneasy about the results--the human rights organizations concerned whether there has been a partial "sellout" by the Commission on the conditions of its visit and the military's concern that the visit will open a Pandora's box--both have concrete and positive benefits to point to for ~~what~~ what otherwise would be seen as a serious set back.

END COMMENT.

CASTRO

RPA

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